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REMARKS

Claims 1-41 were originally presented in the subject application. Claims 1, 18, 37 and 41 were amended, and claims 42-50 added in a response dated July 26, 2004. Claims 1, 2, 4-9, 11-19, 22, 25-29, 31-38, 40 and 41 have herein been canceled without prejudice. No claims have herein been amended or added. Therefore, claims 3, 10, 20, 21, 23, 24, 30, 39 and 42-50 remain in this case.

Claims 42-48 have been allowed, and claims 3, 10, 20, 21, 23, 24, 30 and 39 have been objected to, but indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the grounds of rejection and objection.

Claims Not Addressed

Claims 49 and 50 were added on page 12 of the prior response dated July 26, 2004. However, the final Office Action did not address them. As explained below, Applicants submit that these claims should be part of the group of allowed claims.

Among the claims allowed or allowable are claims 39 and, for example, claims 3 and 44. Claim 49, one of the unaddressed claims, is essentially equivalent to claim 39 without the wherein clause of claim 37 from which claim 39 depends. Similarly, claim 44 is essentially equivalent to claim 3 without the wherein clause of claim 1 from which claim 3 depends. Since claim 39 is indicated as allowable, by comparison to claims 3 and 44, it would seem that claim 49 (and 50 which depends from 49) should also be allowed.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner provide the status of claims 49 and 50 in the next action in this matter.

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejection

The Office Action rejected claims 1-2, 4-9, 11-19, 22, 25-29, 31-38 and 40-41 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as allegedly obvious over Gregg et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,651,033) in view of Mejia (U.S. Patent No. 6,680,970).

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In light of the cancellation herein without prejudice of claims 1, 2, 4-9, 11-19, 22, 25-29, 31-38, 40 and 41, Applicants submit this rejection is now moot.

Objection to Claims

The final Office Action objected to claims 3, 10, 20, 21, 23, 24, 30 and 39 as depending from rejected base claims, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if amended in independent form, including all of the limitations of the relevant base claims and any intervening claims.

In response, Applicants have amended claims 3, 10, 20, 23, 30 and 39 in independent form, including all of the limitations of the relevant base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 21 already depended from claim 20, and claim 24 already depended from claim 23. Thus, Applicants submit that claims 21 and 24 are already in allowable form.

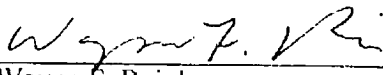
As amended, Applicants submit that claims 3, 10, 20, 21, 23, 24, 30 and 39 are now in allowable form, and respectfully request allowance thereof.

CONCLUSION

For all the above reasons, Applicants maintain that the claims of the subject application define patentable subject matter and earnestly request allowance of claims 3, 10, 20, 21, 23, 24, 30, 39, 49 and 50 (claims 42-48 have already been allowed).

If a telephone conference would be of assistance in advancing prosecution of the subject application, Applicants' undersigned attorney invites the Examiner to telephone him at the number provided.

Respectfully submitted,


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